

January 13, 1998

## QUARTERLY PATIENT CENSUS

**1. PURPOSE:** This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive provides policy and procedures for quarterly census of patients.

**2. POLICY:** It is VHA policy for the quarterly census to be conducted on December 31, 1997, March 31, June 30, and September 30, 1998, at 11:59 P.M. The census files will be closed out at 6:00 PM eastern time on January 16, April 17, July 17, and October 16, 1998.

a. Quarterly census data are required in 1998 to provide timely and accurate medical and administrative information on all VHA medical center patients. The information will be used for resource allocation; healthcare planning; performance monitoring; and for reports to Congress. This interim approach is necessary until VHA has the capacity to implement inpatient reporting of daily admission data into the National Patient Care (NPC) database.

(1) The census was taken on December 31, 1997, and will be taken on March 31, June 30, and September 30, 1998, at 11:59PM.

(2) Patients in the following facilities or levels of care will not be included in this census: non-VA hospitals; state home facilities; community nursing homes; and 1-day stay dialysis patients. Information on these patients is collected separately.

(3) The Chief, Medical Administration Service, or other appropriate official, e.g., Chief, Medical Information Section or Health Information Management Section, will serve as the facility's Census Coordinator and will have administrative responsibility for the quarterly census.

b. Census information will be reported and transmitted to the Austin Automation Center (AAC) using the Census Menu option of Version 5.3 of the Patient Information Management System (PIMS) Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture (VISTA.)

**3. ACTION:** The following procedures outline the steps which will be undertaken by each VISTA supported medical center:

a. Census data will be entered into the Patient Treatment File (PTF) record in VISTA using the "Load/Edit PTF Data" option.

b. All PTF screens will be completed for each census patient as applicable.

c. The PTF record will be "closed for census" using the PTF 701 screen of the "Load/Edit PTF Data" option. Upon successful closing, the required data for the census will be selected from the PTF record and the census record will be created.

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d. The census record will then be released for transmission to the AAC using either the PTF 701 screen of the "Load/Edit PTF Data" option or the "Release Closed Census Records" option.

e. Census data will be transmitted to the AAC using the "Transmit Census Records" option.

f. Census information may be transmitted daily on or after January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1, 1998. Census records indicating error corrections must be corrected, closed out, and received in AAC before 6:00PM central time on January 16, April 17, July 17, and October 16, 1998.

g. PTF records of census patients discharged on or after January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1, 1998 will be closed, released, and transmitted to the AAC when they are completed.

**4. REFERENCES:** None.

**5. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY:** The Co-director, Health Information Resources Service (193B), is responsible for the contents of this VHA Directive.

**6. RESCISSIONS:** Under Secretary for Health Memorandum dated March 24, 1997, is rescinded. This VHA Directive expires October 31, 1998.

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Under Secretary for Health

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